

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AMHERST SCHOOLS

FISCAL YEAR 2009

The Amherst School Committee is an elected body responsible for the public education of all children in kindergarten through grade six and of pre-school children with substantial special needs in our community. The Committee meets regularly on the third Tuesday of each month and welcomes citizen participation at each meeting. The members of this committee also serve as Amherst's members of the Regional School Committee which has responsibility for the educational programs for children in grades seven through twelve.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Student enrollment as of October 1, 2008 was:

GRADE	STUDENTS
Pre K	71
K	178
1	184
2	181
3	174
4	205
5	194
6	<u>200</u>
TOTAL	1,387

Twenty-five children from Amherst attended Charter Schools and 15 Amherst children attended other school districts under the School Choice program.

Primary goals for the Amherst Schools are as follows:

1. Developing and maintaining an up-to-date, innovative, multicultural, academically challenging curriculum that promotes high standards and success for all students.
2. Providing creative, multi-faceted instruction that maintains high standards, engages all students, and enables all students to be successful learners.
3. Making all students feel fully welcome and a part of our schools, regardless of race, class, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation, culture, academic success, or physical abilities.
4. Eliminating the achievement gap among students from different racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
5. Addressing the demands and opportunities facing our schools as a result of the rapid growth in the use of technology throughout our society.
6. Increasing communication and collaboration among the district's stakeholders – students, parents, teachers, staff, administrators, and the larger community – and using parents and the community more effectively as educational resources.
7. Hiring and retaining a high quality teaching and administrative staff.
8. Equipping and maintaining school buildings to provide healthy, accessible, modern learning environments that support the achievement of our mission.

9. Sustaining a physically and emotionally safe environment in our schools for students and staff.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

There were two major highlights during FY 09:

- Hiring a permanent Superintendent—A national search was conducted to hire a permanent Superintendent to replace Dr. Jere Hochman who left the district in July 2008. The Committee voted to hire Dr. Alberto Rodriguez and his tenure begins July 1, 2009.
- Closing Meadow Elementary School—On May 19, 2009, the Amherst School Committee voted to close Mark's Meadow Elementary School at the end of the 2009-2010 school year and redistrict the remaining three elementary schools for equity beginning in 2010-2011.

Amherst School Committee

Kathleen Anderson

Elaine Brighty (through March 31, 2009)

Andrew Churchill

Sonia Correa Pope (through March 31, 2009)

Irv Rhodes (as of April 1, 2009)

Steve Rivkin (as of April 1, 2009)

Catherine Sanderson


AMHERST - PELHAM *Regional* **SCHOOL DISTRICT**
 AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS
 Fiscal Year 2009

The Regional School Committee represents the four communities that comprise the Amherst-Pelham Regional School District: Amherst, Pelham, Leverett, and Shutesbury. It is responsible for the direction and support of the educational programs for students in Grades 7 through 12 from each of these towns. Committee meetings are open to the public, except for executive sessions as prescribed by law, and are held regularly on the second and fourth Tuesday evenings of each month. Opportunity is available at every meeting for public participation.

STUDENTS

Enrollment in the Regional Middle and Senior High Schools as of October 1, 2008 decreased by 53 students. Enrollments on October 1 over the last ten years were as follows:

1999-2000—2,049	2004-2005—1,949
2000-2001—2,057	2005-2006—1,924
2001-2002—2,068	2006-2007—1,877
2002-2003—2,037	2007-2008—1,817
2003-2004—2,043	2008-2009—1,764

In addition, 34 Regional students were enrolled in Vocational Schools as of October 1, 2008. Eleven students attended other school districts under the state's School Choice Program, and 53 students were enrolled at charter schools. Tuition for district students to attend these schools is paid by the Regional School District.

As of April 9, 2009 when this report was prepared, enrollment in the Regional Middle and Senior High Schools was as follows:

Grade	Amherst	Pelham	Leverett	Shutesbury	Wards	Tuition	Total
7	184	19	16	20	-	6	245
8	226	19	28	22	-	7	302
9	223	22	20	20	-	13	298
10	234	18	19	16	-	20	307
11	225	15	13	22	-	19	294
12	214	25	18	26	-	17	300
TOTALS	1,307	118	114	126	--	82	1,747

There were 212 students from Amherst who graduated with the class of 2009.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The instructional program, developed by teachers in all areas of the curriculum, reflects the overall philosophy and goals of education established by the School Committee. An appropriate range of support services remains in place to help students achieve their highest possible potential. Included among these programs are Guidance, Health Services, Special Education, and English Language Learners Program.

Amherst–Pelham Regional High School is a four-year comprehensive school and is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. The student body of the High School and Middle School is culturally diverse with a population that includes 69% Caucasian, 9% African-American, 8% Asian, 10% Hispanic, and 4% multi-racial and includes native speakers of 23 languages. Masters or doctoral degrees are held by 85% of the faculty.

The students in the Regional schools work hard and excel. For the 2007-2008 school year, the high school had 25 National Merit Commendations and 3 National Merit Scholarship semifinalists who received Certificates of Merit, in a class of 314 students. Ninety-one percent of our students will pursue higher education at colleges and universities across the nation after graduation from the Amherst Regional High School. Nationally normed standardized testing results reflect that, overall, our students score significantly above grade level in all areas tested. Students consistently enroll in courses beyond the standard graduation requirements.

PRIMARY GOALS FOR THE AMHERST AND REGIONAL SCHOOLS

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6. Increasing communication and collaboration among the district's stakeholders – students, parents, teachers, staff, administrators, and the larger community – and using parents and the community more effectively as educational resources.
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8. Equipping and maintaining school buildings to provide healthy, accessible, modern learning environments that support the achievement of our mission.
9. Sustaining a physically and emotionally safe environment in our schools for students and staff.

Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee

Michael Hussin, Chair

Marianne Jorgensen, Vice-Chair

Elaine Brighty (through March 31, 2009)

Irv Rhodes (as of April 1, 2009)

Sonia Correa Pope (through March 31, 2009)

Steve Rivkin (as of April 1, 2009)

Catherine Sanderson

Kathleen Anderson

Andrew Churchill

Tracy Farnham

Michael Katz